

VZCZCXR05159
RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHGO #0489 1440922

ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 240922Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6087
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1424
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0309
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4545
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1943
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3863
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7404
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4956
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1136
RUDKIA/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI TH 0984
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS RANGOON 000489

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS; USDA FOR FAS/PECAD, FAS/CNMP, FAS/AAD;
BANGKOK FOR USAID/RDMA: JMACARTHUR, APHIS: NCARDENAS, REO:
JWALLER; PACOM FOR FPA

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EAGR EAID AMED PGOV CASC TBIO KLFU BM
SUBJECT: BURMA AI UPDATE: NEW OUTBREAK IN RANGOON

REF: A) RANGOON 324, B) RANGOON 315, AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On May 22, an outbreak of Avian Influenza in chickens occurred at an isolated poultry farm in Rangoon owned and controlled by the Burmese military. Officials destroyed all the birds and disinfected the premises, but did not institute any controls on the transport of poultry in the area. Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department officials notified us, but did not confirm whether they would inform OIE. No cases of human infection are suspected. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On May 24, an advisor to the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) informed us that fifteen chickens at a farm in Saw Bwa Gyi Gone in Insein Township in northwest Rangoon died on May 22, and many others were sick. The dead birds tested positive for H5N1 by Rapid Test Kit and PCR testing. On May 23, 400 more chickens died. Under the supervision of LBVD officials, farm workers destroyed all remaining birds, using PPEs to cull and bury the chickens and disinfect the area. Altogether, workers destroyed approximately 800 birds.

¶3. (SBU) The military's Rangoon Division Command owns the farms where it keeps broilers and layers for income generation. The farm has facilities to house over 10,000 chickens, but after the recent February-March AI outbreaks in Rangoon, most birds were sold off, and only about 800 twenty-four-week-old layers remained.

¶4. (SBU) According to our contact, because the farm is isolated, officials have not instituted controls on the movement of poultry in the area. He did not know whether LBVD would notify OIE about the outbreak, and said that the Minister of Livestock and Fisheries would make that decision shortly. This is Burma's first recurrence of AI in poultry since April 23, when officials lifted the restrictions on the transport of poultry instituted in response to the February-March AI outbreaks in Rangoon (reflets). The advisor expressed his belief that the virus

is still present in the city.

¶ 15. (SBU) Comment: LBVD's prominent role in the response and quick report to us of a new AI outbreak on a military-run poultry farm is reassuring. Their delay in notifying OIE and imposing traffic restrictions to control the latest case, however, is troubling. The GOB has been unusually open in cooperating with international experts on AI issues to date, but outbreaks within the military's extensive poultry production facilities hit close to vested interests. High level decision makers will choose whether to notify OIE and the public, and follow the steps that have been effective in responding to past outbreaks, or whether to allow commercial impact on military producers and their desire to maintain military secrecy to prevail in this case. End comment.

STOLTZ